

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

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ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 AF-08 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00 DOTE-00
FMC-01 INR-07 NSAE-00 SAL-01 CG-00 DLOS-06 OES-06 L-03
INRE-00 SSO-00 /040 W
-----181456Z 080185 /43

O 181341Z JAN 77
FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8690

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E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: EWWT, NA
SUBJECT: NIGERIAN THREAT TO PREFERENTIAL BERTHING
ARRANGEMENTS

REF: A) STATE 07928, B) STATE 11135

1. RENEWED CONGESTION IN NIGERIAN PORTS HAS MOTIVATED FMG TO
CONSIDER REMOVING PRIORITY BERTHING ARRANGEMENTS FROM FOR-
EIGN CONFERENCE LINES. SINCE OCT. 31, WAITING QUEUE HAS
EXTENDED FROM 70 SHIPS TO OVER 100. IN RESPONSE TO INCR-
EASINGLY VISIBLE MESS, HEAD OF STATE ORDERED NPA TO TAKE
IMMEDIATE ACTION TO REDUCE CONGESTION. ON JANUARY 6 NPA
SENT LETTER TO SHIPPING CONFERENCES ADVISING THAT PRIORITY
BERTHING RIGHTS WOULD BE SUSPENDED INDEFINITELY AS OF FEB-
RUARY 1. LETTER, WHICH WAS RECEIVED ON JAN. 10, ALSO
INVITED CONFERENCE REPS TO MEET WITH NPA ON JANUARY 14 TO
DISCUSS SITUATION.

2. ROOT OF PROBLEM HAS BEEN LAX MANAGEMENT BY NIGERIAN PORT
AUTHORITY (NPA) IN ISSUING TOO MANY REGISTRATIONS TO NON-
CONFERENCE LINE VESSELS. ACCORDING TO REGULATIONS, REGIS-
TRATION CERTIFICATES MUST BE ISSUED 60 DAYS IN ADVANCE OF SHIP'S
ARRIVAL IN NIGERIAN PORT, WITH ISSUANCE THEORETICALLY BASED ON
HOW ESSENTIAL IS SHIP'S CARGO. HANDLING THIS SYSTEM LIGHTLY,
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NPA ALLOWED 5 NON-CONFERENCE SHIPS TO ENTER LAGOS WATERS IN
NOVEMBER, 18 IN DECEMBER, AND 27 SO FAR IN JANUARY. ONLY FOUR
BERTHS ARE AVAILABLE FOR NON-CONFERENCE UNLOADING AND WAITING
LINE IS AGAIN EXTENDING DRAMATICALLY. THIS ACCCOMPANIED IN
PAST THREE MONTHS BY GENERAL DETERIORATION IN ALL PHASES OF
PORT OPERATIONS.

3. AT 1/14 SESSION, ATTENDED BY LARGE NUMBER OF SHIPPING LINE EXECUTIVES, IT AGREED THAT TWO REPRESENTATIVES FROM EACH CONFERENCE WOULD FORM COMMITTEE CHAIRED BY NPA OFFICIAL TO ADVISE NPA ON HOW TO LESSEN CONGESTION AND GENERALLY IMPROVE PORT PRODUCTIVITY. GROUP WORKED THOUGH WEEKEND AND ON 1/17 MET AGAIN WITH NPA HIERARCHY. COMMITTEE PROPOSED NUMBER OF SUGGESTIONS (E.G., CONFERENCE SHIPS ALREADY IN PIPELINE MUST HAVE FIRST CRACK AT PRIORITY BERTHS, COMMITTEE MUST CONTROL BERTHING ASSIGNMENTS FOR ALL VESSELS). OFFICIAL NPA RESPONSE TO PROPOSALS NOT YET AVAILABLE. (FYI. CONFIDENTIALLY ADMITTED AIMOF CONFERENCE REPS IS TO SURRENDER NO MORE THAN 7-10 DAYS PER MONTH AT EACH PRIORITY BERTH TO NON-CONFERENCE VESSELS.)

4. SUSPENSION OF CONFERENCE LINE PRIVILEGES WOULD EXTEND TO ALL NIGERIAN PORTS. IN PORT HARCOURT, FOR EXAMPLE, AMERICA-WEST AFRICAN CONFERENCE RECENTLY RECEIVED GUARANTEE OF DOCKING WITHIN 2-5 DAYS AFTER ARRIVAL IN HARBOR. IF THIS CANCELLED, NEXT SHIP WOULD BE OBLIGED TO GET IN QUEUE BEHIND 27 OTHER WAITING VESSELS.

5. CONTAINER TRAFFIC NOT AFFECTED, AS CONTAINERS IN LAGOS UNLOADED AT SPECIAL BERTH. AMERICA-WEST AFRICAN CONFERENCE ONLY AUTHORIZED 600 CONTAINERS PER MONTH, HOWEVER, IN CONTRAST TO 1700 FOR UKWAL.

6. CONFERENCE LINES SURPRISED AND SEVERELY DISCOURAGED BY NEW THREAT. MONTHS OF CAREFUL PLANNING ON SHIP MOVEMENTS NOW FACE HAVOC. AMERICAN SHIPPING LINES OFFICIALS HAVE POINTED OUT, HOWEVER, THAT THEY WILL STAY IN THE GAME. ACCESS TO NIGERIAN CONFIDENTIAL

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PORTS AND CONTINUED AMICABLE RELATIONS WITH PORT AUTHORITIES CRUCIAL IN THEIR VIEW AS U.S. EXPORTS BEGINNING TO PENETRATE MARKET IN LARGE AMOUNTS.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PORT CONGESTION, AGREEMENTS, CARGO SHIPS, NEGOTIATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 18-Jan-1977 12:00:00 am
Decapton Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decapton Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977LAGOS00543
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770018-0679
Format: TEL
From: LAGOS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770142/aaaabkrb.tel
Line Count: 101
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: f27c47d5-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EB
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 STATE 7928, 77 STATE 11135
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 03-Feb-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3574018
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: NIGERIAN THREAT TO PREFERENTIAL BERTHING ARRANGEMENTS
TAGS: EWWT, NA
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvgwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/f27c47d5-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009